

15
L E T T E R
F R O M

A Person of Quality on Board the *William*
and *Mary* in the FARE of

M E S S I N A

To a Friend in *L O N D O N*.

Wherein is set forth the present State and
Condition of the said CITY.

A L S O

A true Account of the French *F L E E T*
now lying in the Port of *Messina*.

To which is added

A Brief Discourse of the Island of *Sicilia* con-
cerning the several Alterations of *Government*
and *Conquests* made therein.

With Allowance.

L O N D O N,

Printed in the Year, *M D C L X X V I*.

THE

OF

W. B. ALLEN

1870

Printed in the Year MDCCLXXI.

A
L E T T E R

*From aboard the William and Mary in the
Fare of MESSINA.*



N compliance to your
Commands and Advice
to me at my departure,
to be diligent in obser-
ving all things that might
be worth remark in our
Voyage, but most espe-
cially the situation of the principal Cities,
the Customes and Inclinations of the people,
And what other Historical Notions I could
gain from the mouths of the Inhabitants; in
all which I have been very observant hitherto,
as will appear by my *Journal* at my return.

But to gratifie you in the mean time, ha-
ving the opportunity of a Ship bound for

Naples, I have requested the *Master* to convey this Letter to you from thence by the Post.

About two days since we rid at Anchor off *Messina* upon the rear of the *French Fleet*, our *Master* was invited aboard one of the Ships that was nearest to us, who did me that Favour as to carry me on board with him: we were there very civilly welcomed and nobly treated. The *French Captain* spoke English very well, and entertained us after a Ship Collation with a large Discourse concerning their late Fight with the *Spanish* and *Dutch Fleet*, and their Fortunate success therein. First in relieving the City *Messina* with timely Provisions, and coming off with honour in the Engagement.

But, *Sir*, I suppose this Discourse of the Engagement will be no News to you by that time this Letter comes to your hand, since you will have divers Relations and Particulars of the Fight long before.

The number of their Fleet was above Thirty Capital Ships, besides their Gallies and small Vessels, to which number they expected an addition from *France* to make up about

about Fifty Sail, which they hoped would come speedily, for they expected a second Engagement within a short time, for they had lately heard that Lieutenant Admiral De Ruyter was returned back and joyned with the Spanish Ships and Gallies in order to at-
taque them again.

The Captain was a Man no less a Scholar than a Souldier, and gave us a pithy Historical Account of the City *Messina* and *Sicilia*, the Heads of which Discourse, or so much of it as may come within the bounds of a Letter, I have here communicated to you, knowing how acceptable such divertisement hath been alwayes to you.

Messina is the Principal City of Sicilia, being strongly situate and well accommodated for Trade or Merchandise, though Palermo be the Regal Seat and Residence of the Vice-Roy. This Messina was raised out of the ruines of the once Famous City Zancchia, which was destroyed by the Saracens, who overtun all Sicilia, and possessed the Island many years; but at length the Saracens was driven out by the Normans, who quietly possessed and governed the Island above

Forty

Fortythree years; which Governours were stiled Counts of Sicilia; but then the Famous Captain Robert Gascordo, Brother to the King of Arragon layes claim to Puglia, then possessed by the Normans, and comes against it with a considerable Army, and takes it for himselfe; and then prosecutes the War farther, pretending his Brothers claim to the whole Island of Sicilia, and by the assistance of his Brothers (the King of Arragon) Forces he maintained the claim, and conquered all Sicily, and dispossessed the Normans.

To this Robert Gascordo Pope Nicholas the Second gave the Title of Duke of Sicily; but the Sicilians were soon weary of this Government, and revolted from the Arragonians, and with the consent of the Pope, called in Carolus de Anjou, Brother to St. Lewis King of France, and invested him in the Throne, and swore Allegiance to him.

Thus was the Island governed by the Anjouans about the space of Forty years, and then Piero de Arragon contrived and plotted with the Sicilians the Massacre of the French throughout all the Island; the Day, Time, and manner appointed being come, notice was given by

by the ringing of the Vespers Bell, and then this Tragical Plot was put in execution. After which this Pietro de Arragon was elected to the Government of Sicilia. Upon this there followed tedious and terrible Wars between the French and the Arragonians and Sicilians; but at last the Arragonians were conquered and driven out of Sicilia by Carolus the Eighth King of France, and the Sicilians submitted to the French Government, and lived peaceably and quietly under it many years. And in the Reign of Ferando King of Spain Wars happening between the French and the Spaniards, Sicilia was taken by Consalvo Ferando the Great Captain of Spain, who took Messina, and afterwards subdued the whole Island, and settled a Spanish Government there. From this Ferando the Island of Sicilia came by succession to Carolus the Fifth Emperour, and from him to Philip the Second King of Spain; and so by succession it hath been subject to the Crown of Spain to this time. This is a short Account of what I intend hereafter to enlarge upon and send it to you.

THE

THE City *Messina* is at present in pretty good condition, but before the French Fleet arriv-
ed to bring them Provision, they were reduced
to great straits, being forced to eat all manner of
Vermin for their subsistence. We met With a Ship
that had put in there about a moneth before the
French Fleet arrived, that told us they came aboard
them like Bees, to search for Provision, and pro-
ffered any money for it; one of which offered three
Pieces of Eight for a few dried Skins of Fishes,
which the Cook had thrown by as useless. What
will not Necessity and Hunger drive a man to!
We are all very well and merrily sayling, I hope
you are in the like good condition. What further
opportunity offers it self to me, I shall readily em-
brace and make use of it to acquaint you with the
proceedings of our Voyage, and subscribe my self

Your most obliged

Servant and Nephew,

T. F.

THE

